

JUN 29 1964

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## Books in Review

### Study of 'Hidden' Arms of Government

THE INVISIBLE GOVERNMENT. By David Wise and Thomas B. Ross. Random. \$5.95

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THIS book is an attempt, say its authors, "within the bounds of national security, to reveal the nature, size and power of the Invisible Government. It is not intended to be an 'expose,' although much of the material has never been printed anywhere else before. It is an attempt to describe a hidden American institution which the American people, who finance it, have a right to know about."

The writer's define the "Invisible Government" as those Federal agencies which operate substantially beyond the ken of public awareness, such as the Central Intelligence Agency—the most important component, in their opinion, of the Invisible Government—the Atomic Energy Commission, the most free-wheeling component; the National Security Agency, the most secretive; the new Defense Intelligence Agency (whose deputy director was until recently a Marylander, Lt. Gen. William W. Quinn, of Crisfield), and several others. The function and potential of these governmental bodies, the authors feel, "raise the question of how far a free society, in attempting to preserve itself, can emulate a closed society without becoming indistinguishable from it."

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This question is a crucial one. The authors—Mr. Ross is a member of the Washington bureau of the Chicago Sun-Times, Mr. Wise is chief of the New York Herald-Tribune bureau there—proceed to a reply in the manner of their joint "The U-2 Affair" (1962). That manner is compounded of superior journalistic style, ostensibly exhaustive inquiry, a veneer

of scholarship (some chapter notes, an index), and a tone of malice.

Until the concluding chapter, a reader of this book receives the impression that nearly everything the "Intelligence community" at Washington does is bad. Coincident with such an impression one can point to overstatement here, gratuitous castigation there. And though the authors disclaim any attempt at an "expose," the list on page 245 of telephone numbers for CIA branch officers around the country smacks of nothing so much as those "Confidential" books put out a few years ago by another pair of journalists. The present reviewer detected an historical inaccuracy concerning Army Intelligence. United States officials have informed him that the volume contains approximately 250 other errors of greater or less magnitude and, in their opinion, at least 100 instances of breach of security within the meaning of the Espionage Act of 1917, as amended. These are grave charges.

The problem posited by all such spokesmen for the public conscience is the nature of the public's right to knowledge. To what degree may a citizen inquire into the mechanism of his government's conduct of foreign affairs? When does a constitutional right—which is basic and general—merge into a privilege—which is discretionary and special—and how is the boundary line marked off? Such queries would be academic if the United States were not confronted by a massive and malevolent enemy whose policy is so structured as to look upon this problem not as the worthy dilemma of a mature civilization but as a symptom of national weakness. Mr. Wise and

Mr. Ross see, instead of a problem, a specter.

Graduates of Columbia and Yale, respectively, they are too sophisticated to maintain that the citizen has an unrestricted right to know. They do claim that secrecy in government is *ipso facto* evil, and proceed to focus a searing spotlight on what they allege to be some of the results of that evil.

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They assert, for example, that the President's briefings from the Intelligence community—on which he bases decisions of international significance—reach him through the funnel of one mouthpiece only, that of the director of Central Intelligence. They regard it as dire that the academic world is lending, its brains to Washington on a contract basis. They look back in anger at the spectacle of taxpayers voluntarily contributing to "Freedom Radios" broadcasting overseas which are already subsidized by government. They grow white-lipped over the money allotted to selected factions in foreign countries friendly to the United States. They pinpoint instances of bureaucratic evasion, ineptitude, and ignorance. They do all these things readably and persuasively. If they chew over much that has been chewed before (such as the Bay of Pigs, or Vietnam), they also serve up several new side dishes for tasting. And they conclude with a chapter of such sedate, well pondered recommendations that we are left to wonder just how much of what went earlier was thrown in for shock effect. Here is a book worth reading and growing irritated at. There is nothing bland about it.

CURTIS CARROLL DAVIS

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